

Message Text

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ORIGIN PM-05

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 PA-01 ISO-00 ACDA-12 NSCE-00 SSO-00
CCO-00 SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 SP-02
INRE-00 /059 R

DRAFTED BY PM/ISP - BWMACDONALD:LLB
APPROVED BY PM - JHKAHAN
EUR/RPM - MLBRECKON
NSC - RMOLANDER
ACDA - JTIMBIE
S/PRS - JTRATTNER
PM/DCA - MPALMER
PM/ISP - J. H. HAWES
S/S-0: RCASTRODALE

-----001766 212036Z /50

O 212001Z APR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE
INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS IMMEDIATE
USMISSION GENEVA

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USSALT II

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:MNUC, US, UR

SUBJECT: EVANS AND NOVAK ON MINUTEMAN SURVIVABILITY AND
PROTOCOL

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF EVANS AND NOVAK PIECE IN POST
APRIL 21 ENTITLED "THE COMING SALT BATTLE." BEGIN TEXT:

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THE QUAGMIRE THAT PRESIDENT CARTER IS ABOUT TO ENTER IN THE
BATTLE OF SALT II IS DEPICTED BY A SECRET STATE DEPART-

MENT WORKING PAPER THAT CONTRADICTS BOTH PUBLICLY STATED
POLICY AND EXPERT OPINION.

THE WORKING PAPER ASSERTS THAT THE MINUTEMAN THE US

INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILE (ICBM) CAN SURVIVE SOVIET ATTACK THROUGH THE 1980S IF A HOTLY OPPOSED PROTOCOL TO SALT II IS EXTENDED. YET CARTER ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS ARE SELLING THE PROSPECTIVE NEW TREATY ON GROUNDS THAT THE PROTOCOL NEED NOT BE EXTENDED WHEN IT EXPIRES IN 1980. MOREOVER, PENTAGON EXPERTS SAY THERE IS NO WAY SALT II-PROTOCOL OR NO PROTOCOL-CAN PROTECT THE MINUTEMAN FROM SOVIET ATTACK.

THOSE CONTRADICTIONS POSE THE CENTRAL QUESTION ABOUT THE NEW STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION TREATY NEARING COMPLETION: WOULD THE UNITED STATES BE LESS OR MORE SECURE BECAUSE OF SALT II? THE INTRIQUE THAT LIES AHEAD IN DEBATING THAT QUESTION MAY WELL MAKE THE PRESIDENT LOOK BACK AT HIS JUST-COMPLETED PANAMA CANAL AGONY WITH NOSTALGIC PLEASURE.

A KEY FIGURE IS SEN. HENRY M. JACKSON (D-WASH). WITHOUT HIS SUPPORT, CARTER WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO WIN THE TWO-THIRDS SENATE VOTE FOR RATIFICATION. JACKSON PRIVATELY SAYS SALT II SO PRESERVES AND AUGMENTS SOVIET STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES THAT HE CANNOT BACK IT.

YET WHITE HOUSE STRATEGISTS FIND A RAY OF HOPE TOWARD WINNING OVER JACKSON AND OTHER DEFENSE ORIENTED SENATORS. JACKSON FINDS NOTHING ALL THAT ONEROUS IN THE TREATY ITSELF, WHICH WOULD EXPIRE IN 1985. HE OBJECTS TO THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROTOCOL, EXPIRING IN 1980, WHICH PROHIBITS MOBILE MISSILES (AS WELL AS LIMITING CRUISE MISSILES).

THE RESTRICTION ON MOBILE MISSILES BECOMES DECISIVE BECAUSE RECENT SOVIET MISSILE TESTS REVEAL A DRAMATIC BREAK-THROUGH IN ACCURACY OF SOVIET SS18 AND SS19 ICBMS. ON THE BASIS OF THAT BREAKTHROUGH, SOME PENTAGON ANALYSTS NOW ESTIMATE THAT THE MINUTEMAN WOULD BE VULNERABLE TO SOVIET ATTACK BY THE EARLY 1980S, PUT IN PLAIN LANGUAGE, THAT MEANS A MAJOR ELEMENT IN US STRATEGIC DETERRENCE WILL BE UNABLE TO SURVIVE A SOVIET ATTACK AS EARLY AS THREE YEARS FROM NOW.

THE ANTIDOTE IS TO CHANGE THE PRESENT MINUTEMAN SILOS AND DEVELOP MOBILE MISSILES (PUSHING AHEAD THE NOW SUSPENDED MX SURVIVABLE ICBM BASING SYSTEM). BUT ALL SUCH ACTIVITY WOULD BE PROHIBITED BY SALT II, WHICH DOES PERMIT THE SOVIET UNION TO TRANSFORM SINGLE WARHEAD MISSILES INTO HUNDREDS OF MULTIPLE-WARHEADS AND THEREBY THREATEN THE MINUTEMAN.

THE ANSWER CONSIDERED BY WHITE HOUSE STRATEGISTS IS TO

MAKE CLEAR THAT THE MX IS PROHIBITED ONLY UNTIL THE PROTOCOL EXPIRES (IN 1980 BY U.S. CALCULATIONS, LATER BY RUSSIAN). THE SCOOP JACKSONS CAN BE REASSURED THAT MX DEVELOPMENT WILL BEGIN THEN.

THUS, THE STATE DEPARTMENT SALT WORKING PAPER (DATED MARCH 7 AND TITLED "THE VIABILITY OF THE U.S. STRATEGIC DETERRENCE") COMES LIKE A WARNING SIGNAL IN THE NIGHT: "THE CONSTRAINTS ON QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE SOVIET ICBMS IN THE DRAFT SALT PROTOCOL HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO IMPROVE THE MINUTEMAN SURVIVABILITY PROBLEM AS LONG AS THE PROTOCOL IS EXTENDED BEYOND 1980... WE ESTIMATE THAT EXTENDING THE PROTOCOL MIGHT INCREASE THE THEORETICAL NUMBER OF MINUTEMAN SURVIVORS IN 1986 FROM ABOUT 100 TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ABOUT 200."

THE CLAIM THAT SALT II CAN SAVE THE MINUTEMAN ECHOES TWO SECRET STUDIES PREPARED FOR THE PRESIDENT BY ACADEMICALLY ORIENTED THEORETICIANS. A WHITE HOUSE-CONTRACTED STUDY (CALLED THE PRESS REPORT AFTER PRESIDENTIAL SCIENCE ADVISER FRANK PRESS) DENIED ANY "IMMIMENT" THREAT TO THE MINUTEMAN, WHICH "WILL REMAIN A SIGNIFICANT SURVIVABLE COMPONENT OF THE US DETERRENT THROUGHOUT MOST OF THE 1980S." A DEFENSE DEPARTMENT-CONTRACTED STUDY (CALLED THE JASON REPORT) IS EVEN MORE BLUNT: "PRESENT SOVIET STRATEGIC FORCES POSE NO THREAT TO THE MINUTEMAN."

THE RESPONSE BY PENTAGON EXPERTS HAS BEEN SHEER OUTRAGE. INTERNAL MEMORANDA AT THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT CONTEND THE TWO STUDIES REACH "UNSUBSTANTIATED, OPINIONATED AND UNFOUNDED CONCLUSIONS" AND "INDULGE IN PROPAGANDA-LIKE STATEMENTS." DEFENSE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS HAVE NOT MINCED WORDS IN CLOSED-DOOR TESTIMONY ON CAPITAL HILL: THE MINUTEMAN IS QUICKLY BECOMING VULNERABLE.

BUT IS THE PRESIDENT GETTING THE WORD? PENTAGON EXPERTS DOUBT IT. AND IF CARTER BELIEVES THE MINUTEMAN IS TRULY PROTECTED UNDER THE PROTOCOL OF SALT II, HE BECOMES ENTWINED IN A MASS OF CONTRADICTIONS FROM WHICH THERE IS NO EASY ESCAPE.

IF THE MINUTEMAN CAN SURVIVE THROUGH THE 1980S, WHY DO THE PENTAGON EXPERTS SAY OTHERWISE? IF IT CANNOT, WILL CARTER PROMISE DEVELOPMENT OF MOBILE MISSILES ONCE THE PROTOCOL EXPIRES? IF HE DOES, WHAT ABOUT STATE DEPARTMENT CLAIMS THAT THE PROTOCOL PROTECTS THE MINUTEMAN? HOW, THEN CAN JACKSON'S CONCERNS ABOUT SOVIET STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BE SATISFIED CONSISTENT WITH PUSHING SALT II? JIMMY CARTER MAY YET YEARN FOR THE CLASSIC SIMPLICITY OF WRESTLING WITH THE DECONCINI RESERVATION. END TEXT.

2. FOLLOWING ARE Q'S AND A'S PREPARED FOR DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN APRIL 21. BEGIN TEXT:

Q. IS THERE A SECRET STATE DEPARTMENT STUDY WHICH LOOKS AT THE VIABILITY OF THE US DETERRENT AS DISCUSSED BY EVANS AND NOVAK?

A. THERE IS A SERIES OF STUDIES WHICH ARE PREPARED BY THE SALT INTER-AGENCY WORKING GROUP WHICH LOOK AT A WHOLE RANGE OF ISSUES WHICH COULD IMPACT ON THE SALT NEGOTIATIONS. IN THIS PROCESS, SOME AGENCIES WILL PREPARE

DRAFTS ON ISSUES, WHICH ARE THEN CIRCULATED FOR INTERAGENCY COORDINATION. I DON'T WANT TO GET INTO ANY DETAILS ON ALL THE ISSUES WE ARE LOOKING AT. BUT THE IMPORTANT THING HERE IS THAT ALL OUR WORK IS DONE ON AN INTER-AGENCY BASIS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A SALT WORKING GROUP.

Q. WHAT IS THE STATE DEPARTMENT POSITION OF THE QUESTION OF MINUTEMAN VULNERABILITY AND ITS RELATION TO THE SALT TALKS?

A. I THINK THE EASIEST WAY TO ANSWER THAT IS TO REFER YOU TO SECRETARY OF DEFENSE HAROLD BROWN'S STATEMENT TO THE CONGRESS IN HIS ANNUAL REPORT OF FEBRUARY 2.

"THE PROJECTED VULNERABILITY OF BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND SOVIET SILO-BASED ICBM FORCES IS ALSO WELL RECOGNIZED. IT EXISTS WITH OR WITHOUT SALT LIMITATIONS. THOUGH IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO DELAY THAT VULNERABILITY THROUGH SALT PROPOSALS, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT SITUATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CAN BE REVERSED BE A NEGOTIATED ACCORD"

THE STATE DEPARTMENT AGREES WITH THAT ASSESSMENT.

Q. DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT DIFFER WITH DEFENSE BY URGING THAT THE SALT II PROTOCOL BE EXTENDED?

A. NO. AS YOU KNOW THE US POSITION IS THAT THE SALT II
PROTOCOL WILL END IN 1980.

Q. IF THE PROTOCOL EXPIRES IN 1980, WHAT ABOUT
LIMITATIONS ON ISSUES COVERED BY THE PROTOCOL, SUCH AS
CRUISE MISSILES AND MOBILE ICBMS? WILL THESE LIMITS
SIMPLY DISAPPEAR?

A. THE QUESTION OF WHAT LIMITS, IF ANY, MIGHT BE PLACED
ON THESE SYSTEMS AFTER THE EXPIRATION OF THE PROTOCOL
WOULD BE THE SUBJECT OF FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS.

END TEXT.

3. POSTS AUTHORIZED TO DRAW ON Q'S AND A'S ON IF-ASKED
BASIS. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, TOSEC, MINUTEMAN, MISSILES, SALT (ARMS CONTROL)
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE102240
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: BWMACDONALD:LLB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780171-0704
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780429/aaaaayol.tel
Line Count: 240
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 522654a9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN PM
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2885351
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EVANS AND NOVAK ON MINUTEMAN SURVIVABILITY AND PROTOCOL
TAGS: MNUC, SOPN, US, UR, WASHINGTON POST
To: SECRETARY NATO POSTS MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/522654a9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014